

fix the breaches in the levees of New Orleans.

Ambassador Chan Heng Chee's leadership and support has been particularly helpful during this time of crisis. As our nations continue to work together, America remains grateful for its strong friendship with Singapore as allies in the war on terrorism.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

FREEDOM'S PROGRESS

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Afghanistan on the elections they just held.

The saying that "freedom is not free" rings true for those who defied the Taliban, defied the warlords, and made history by freely electing their leaders this past Sunday.

During the past 4 years, people have forgotten what the Taliban stood for: public executions at soccer stadiums; banning the Internet, music, television and education; preventing women from going to school or work outside the home. A woman caught wearing finger-nail polish may have had her fingertips chopped off.

This week however, Afghans, 12 million strong, have shown the world that they will not go back to tyranny, they will not take a step back into oppression, and will not buckle when taking on the challenges of democracy.

Madam Speaker, Afghanistan demonstrates the most recent chapter in freedom's march. It is a glorious story whose success should be recognized and applauded.

OPERATION OFFSET

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, today at 11:30 I will join some of my colleagues in a press conference for Operation Offset.

I want to thank the leadership for the opportunity to participate in providing offsets as we look at ways to fund Hurricane Katrina's disaster relief program. I want to thank them for leading the way with the 2006 budget that this body recently passed. And I want to thank them for the opportunity to focus on what I think is the heart and soul of our conference, fiscal stewardship.

As I make my remarks today, my focus is going to be on government overpayments, one of which is the earned income tax credit which is overpaid by \$9 billion annually over a 10-year period. A savings of \$90 billion could be realized here. The GAO, the CBO, and the Inspectors General have numerous ideas and suggestions and

ways that we can rein in government spending. It is time for us to heed our own advice.

PROPER CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, we are starting to hear a lot of talk about where is the proper place for the investigation into the response and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Madam Speaker, I submit that the proper place for that investigation is here in the United States Congress. We have the responsibility, indeed, we have the constitutional obligation to be the ones responsible for this oversight investigation. In fact, my committee, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, maintains a standing subcommittee called the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, a committee that already has subpoena power, a committee that has a history of bipartisanship.

No matter which party was in power, this committee does have a history of bipartisanship, and I think it is the correct committee to investigate the response in the aftermath to the hurricane.

An independent commission, as we have already seen in the last year, can become a side show for partisanship, and yet we still have to convene our own congressional committees in order to write the legislation.

No, the correct path for this Congress to take is to use an already established committee for the investigation of the response and aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

THANKING AMERICA'S FIRST RESPONDERS

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to America's first responders, the men and women who work every day to safeguard our communities. This Nation owes so much to the firemen, the EMTs and other emergency workers who put themselves in harm's way to keep us and our loved ones safe.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, our country is once again reminded of the dedication and bravery of our first responders. Their contributions in the gulf coast were felt by every person rescued from a rooftop, by every person receiving medical care, and every person evacuated from a flooded city.

These past few weeks, we have been able to watch the valor of our first responders on TV and we have read about it in the newspapers, but we should remember that these men and women are

protecting our community every single day, not just when a disaster strikes. And while it may not be televised every day, their heroism is certainly valued every day.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in thanking America's first responders.

APPLAUDING GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, we just had the opportunity this morning, some of us, to hear from the Governor of Mississippi, Haley Barbour.

What a refreshing example of leadership Mr. Barbour has offered our country. Unfortunately, as compared to the Governor of his neighboring State, Louisiana, faced with the same disasters, faced with loss of life, faced with billions of dollars in property damage, Mr. Barbour did not take the opportunity to bash Washington, to whine about what the Federal Government did or did not do; but, rather, on a local level, with folks like the mayor of Biloxi and the mayors of all the other towns and the police chiefs and the police forces and the local emergency management agencies, faced up to the disaster, did everything that they could to show folks that yes, this is tough, and unfortunately government is not the answer to everything, but we can work together, we can face up to this thing and we can bring Mississippi back and bring Mississippi back strong.

I applaud Governor Barbour for the leadership he has provided. He gave us a case of one police force where the police station was flooded. The police officers did not cut and run. They did not evacuate. They went to the top floor. The top floor got flooded. They went to the roof of the building. It got flooded. They swam to nearby tree tops. They spent the night on trees. And yet the next morning rather than whine and say, oh, pity me, they came back to work and never evacuated, even though on a personal level all of those police officers from this particular precinct lost all their houses. Their homes were gone and their families had to evacuate for many weeks of separation.

That is the face of some of the great American people that we are seeing, not just in Mississippi but also in Louisiana and Alabama, but I particularly applaud Governor Barbour for his leadership.

RED TAPE HINDERING AID TO EVACUEES

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Madam Speaker, it is amazing to me that American troops can get sick off Halliburton food, yet